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REMARKS

Claims 1-92 are pending in this application. All of the claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 over various combinations of Caronni, Chaney, Aziz, Foladare, and Kadansky. Claims 1, 17, 32, 47, 63, and 78 are currently amended. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The presently claimed invention distinguishes the cited references because a single video conference is delivered via multiple virtual channels defined by different time durations, wherein a requestor is assigned to one of the virtual channels based on correlation of the amount of time and start time indicated by the requestor with the amounts of time remaining until expiration of the respective virtual channels at that start time. One advantage of the claimed technique is that member devices associated with longer duration multicast groups need not be rekeyed by a new member device joining a shorter duration multicast group, i.e., a person joining for only a portion of the video conference. In practical terms, a core group that participates in the video conference for a full duration of, e.g., 4 hours, is assigned to one virtual channel and a participant that joins for only 15 minutes in the middle of the video conference is assigned to a different virtual channel so that the core group is not rekeyed. The Office suggests that establishing a virtual channel defined by an amount of time remaining until expiration is taught in Fig. 4 of Chaney. However, Chaney actually teaches use of **time of day** rather than **time remaining until expiration at a particular start time**. Independent claims 1, 17, 32, 47, 63 and 78 have been amended to emphasize that both duration of time and start time are employed in assigning a requestor to a virtual channel. Apart from that fundamental difference, if Chaney employed the presently claimed technique the result would be a system that delivers the same television programming on

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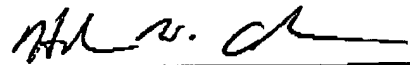
every channel, but for different durations. Clearly, Chaney does not teach such a technique, and it would appear to be of no practical use anyway. It is of practical use in videoconferencing, however, for the reasons stated above. Claims 2-16, 18-31, 33-46, 48-62, 64-78, and 79-92 are dependent claims which further distinguish the invention, and which are allowable for the same reasons as their respective base claims. Withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-92 is therefore requested.

Applicants have made a diligent effort to place the claims in condition for allowance. However, should there remain unresolved issues that require action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned, Applicants' Attorney, at 978-264-4001 (X305) so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

For these reasons, and in view of the above amendments, this application is now considered to be in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Date

  
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